

Master of Città di Castello, active c. 1305-1320
Maestà (Madonna and Child with Four Angels)



KRESS CATALOGUE NUMBER

K2063

IDENTIFIER

1350

ARTIST

Master of Città di Castello, active c. 1305-1320

NATIONALITY

Italian

DATE

c. 1290

MEDIUM

tempera on panel

TYPE OF OBJECT

Painting

DIMENSIONS

painted surface: 230 x 141.5 cm (90 9/16 x 55 11/16 in)

LOCATION

National Gallery of Art, Washington, District of Columbia

HISTORICAL ATTRIBUTION

Master of Badia a Isola, active c. 1290-1320

PROVENANCE

Possibly the church of San Francesco in San Quirico d'Orcia (Siena). [1] Pompeo Lemmi (or Lammi?), San Quirico d'Orcia; Giacobbe Preziotti, San Quirico d'Orcia, by c. 1930; [2] (Italian art market); [3] Baron Alberto Fassini, Tivoli; Corinna Uberti Trossi, Livorno, by 1949; (Ettore Sestieri, Rome), by 1951; [4] (Count Alessandro Contini-Bonacossi, Florence), by 1953; [5] sold 1954 to the Samuel H. Kress Foundation, New York; [6] gift 1961 to NGA.

[1] The panel's original provenance is uncertain. It was recorded by Johann Anton Ramboux (1798-1866) in the first half of the

nineteenth century, whose *Sammlung von Umrissen dienend zur Geschichte der bildenden Künste des Mittelalters in Italien in den Jahren 1818-1822 und 1833-1843 aufgenommen*, consisting of ten volumes of copies and sketches and now in the library of the Städelsches Kunstinstitut in Frankfurt am Main, contains the drawing (vol. 3, fol. 20, no. 507) of the Washington painting. During his first Italian visit (1818–1822) Ramboux was able to visit Siena and neighboring territories only briefly; therefore, the sketch of the NGA painting probably dates to his later visit in the years 1833–1843 (see Hans Joachim Ziemke, “Ramboux und die sienesische Kunst,” *Städel Jahrbuch* N.S. 2 [1969]: 255-300). Ramboux notes the painting as present in a cloister of the principal church of San Quirico (“Tafel . . . welche sich in einem Kreuzgang der Hauptkirche zu S. Quirico befindet”), probably referring to the Collegiata. This church, however, never had a cloister (see A. Canestrelli, “La Pieve di S. Quirico in Osenna,” *Siena monumentale* 1 [1906]: 5-21). On the other hand, in the early decades of the twentieth century the panel was considered to have come from San Francesco in San Quirico d’Orcia, a church situated in the center of town and originally provided with such a structure. The Franciscans are known to have established a community at an early date in San Quirico; their presence there is recorded ever since the thirteenth century (Luigi Pellegrini, *Insedimenti francescani nell’Italia del Duecento*, Rome, 1984: 179). Their convent was suppressed in 1783 (Laura Martini, “Le vicende costruttive della chiesa di San Francesco,” in *San Quirico d’Orcia. La Madonna di Vitaleta: arte e devozione*, San Quirico d’Orcia [Siena], 1997: 19). The panel may then have been transferred to the Collegiata, or to some other site, but in fact, we have no further information about it until c. 1930. Describing the works of art contained in the church of San Francesco in 1865, Francesco Brogi (*Inventario generale degli oggetti d’arte della provincia di Siena*, Siena, 1897) fails to cite the Gallery’s painting, nor is it included in the list relating to the church of the Collegiata of San Quirico that he himself drew up. Evidently by that time the panel had been removed from the church and was either in private hands or in some small oratory; because it was the property not of the church but of a lay confraternity, its owners could have moved it from its former location. The arrival of the painting in (or its restitution to) San Francesco is conceivable after 1865, when the bishop of Montalcino entrusted the church to the Pia Commissione di Santa Maria di Vitaleta to undertake the necessary work of restoration and refurbishment of the building, later renamed Santa Maria di Vitaleta. This same commission later brought a suit against the possessors of the painting in 1930, claiming its restitution. The panel, therefore, which does not figure among the sacred furnishings entrusted by the Curia of Montalcino to the Pia Commissione at the time of the transfer of the church (in 1865), could have been reinstated to it only some time later and could have remained there for a number of years, sufficiently long enough for the inhabitants of the town to remember it (see Martini 1997).

[2] The “tavola preduccesca” cited in the documentation in the archive of the Soprintendenza of Siena is described as “presso il Sig. Lemmi”; Fern Rusk Shapley (*Catalogue of the Italian Paintings*, 2 vols., Washington, D.C., 1979: 1:173) speaks of Pompeo Lammi. In the suit brought to claim property rights over the painting, however, the owner of the painting is named as Giacobbe Preziotti (Martini 1997, 19 n. 6).

[3] In November 1936, again according to the information gleaned by Laura Martini, the Ministry for National Education notified the Soprintendenza that property rights had been confirmed to belong to the private citizens who then owned the painting, and its export authorized. Probably following this decision, the restoration of the panel began and the painting was offered for sale on the Italian art market.

[4] Shapley 1979, 1:173 places the panel in the Fassini collection and with the dealer Ettore Sestieri. A catalogue of the collection, then only recently formed, of barone Alberto Fassini exists, published without a date in the early 1930s, but it does not include this painting among those distributed among his various houses. Gertrude Coor Achenbach (“The early nineteenth-century aspect of a dispersed polyptych by the Badia a Isola Master,” *The Art Bulletin* 42 [1960]: 143), who places the painting “shortly after World War II in a private collection near Tivoli,” refers, probably, to that of Alberto Fassini. Elisa de Giorgi (*L’eredità Contini Bonaccossi*, Milan, 1988: 197) reports the presence of the painting in the Uberti Trossi collection.

[5] The date of the painting’s purchase by Contini-Bonacossi is unknown, but it must have been in his possession by 1953, when he proposed, with some insistence, to sell it to the Kress Collection (see De Giorgi 1988).

[6] On 7 June 1954, the Kress Foundation made an offer to Contini-Bonacossi for sixteen paintings, including NGA 1961.9.77, which was listed as *Madonna and Child and Four Angels* by Master of Badia a Isola. In a draft of one of the documents prepared for the count’s signature in connection with the offer, this painting is described as one “which came from my personal collection in Florence.” Contini-Bonacossi accepted the offer on 30 June 1954; the final payment for the purchase was ultimately made in early 1957, after his death in 1955. (See copies of correspondence in NGA curatorial files.) The painting was not given to the NGA until 1961, and in a letter to Evelyn Sandberg Vavalà of 1 August 1960 (copy in NGA curatorial files), Fern Rusk Shapley continues to express doubts about it, wondering whether the *Maestà* was “good enough to warrant our making an effort . . . to get it for the National Gallery.”

ACCESSION NUMBER

1961.9.77

KRESS NUMBER

2063

LEGACY NGA NUMBER

1629

1 ACQUISITION

Contini Bonacossi, Alessandro, June 30, 1954

1 DISTRIBUTION

Gift to National Gallery of Art, December 09, 1961

EXTERNAL LINKS

Related Collection Record

<https://www.nga.gov/collection/art-object-page.46176.html>

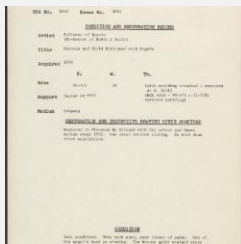
Related National Gallery of Art Library Image Collections Record

https://library.nga.gov/permalink/01NGA_INST/1p5jkvq/alma99421213804896

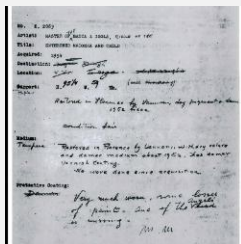
Related National Gallery of Art Systematic Catalog

<https://www.nga.gov/research/online-editions/italian-paintings-of-the-thirteenth-and-fourteenth-centuries.html>

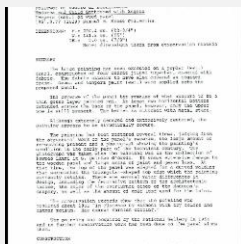
5 ARCHIVAL ITEMS



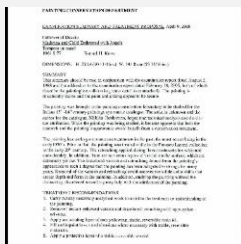
K2063 - Condition and restoration record, circa 1950s-1960s



K2063 - Condition and restoration record, circa 1950s-1960s



K2063 - Examination summary, 1988



K2063 - Examination summary and treatment proposal, 2009



RECORD LINK

<https://kress.nga.gov/Detail/objects/1350>